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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001490

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: NCP/SPLM DISCUSSIONS ON DARFUR AND ELECTIONS

REF: KHARTOUM 1433

Classified By: A/CDA Mark Asquino, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (SBU) The NCP and SPLM have been negotiating over the past few days on electoral issues as well as a package of concessions that the GNU could offer on Darfur as part of the Sudan People,s Initiative, NCP insider Yehia Bebiker told polchief October 6. Bebiker accompanied Vice President Taha to Juba October 5 ostensibly for discussions with FVP Salva Kiir on CPA implementation issues, chief among them the outstanding issue of the National Electoral Commission (but he said the conversation was mostly about options on Darfur).

Regarding the National Electoral Commission, Bebiker acknowledged that the two proposed heads of the Commission, Abel Alier and Abdallah Idriss, had refused to lead the Commission and the NCP and SPLM agreed to put pressure on them to assume the posts. Bebiker said that for now the two CPA parties had no other good candidates in mind to head the Commission. (Note: Abyei was also a point of discussion between Taha and Kiir, and on October 6 the Presidency issued decrees naming the remaining members of the Abyei Interim Administration. End note.)

12. (SBU) With regard to Darfur, Bebiker said that SPLM SG Pagan Amun and D/SG Yasir Arman would travel to Khartoum in the next few days to continue discussions with the NCP regarding a package of items that could be offered on Darfur, including a single Darfur state, a vice presidential post, and development funding, among others. Bebiker said that President Bashir would like to launch the Sudan People,s Initiative on October 16, first with consultations in Sudan and then with a conference in Doha, Qatar. Bebiker said it was unlikely that the GOS would be willing to announce publicly a package of concessions on Darfur, due to the risk that these could be rejected by the rebels, or that the rebels would only take these concessions and demand more. However Bebiker, who was involved in the Naivasha negotiations on the CPA, thought it would be useful for an intermediary such as UN/AU Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole to carry proposals back and forth between the government and the factions. Polchief encouraged Bebiker to contact Bassole (see para 5). Bebiker said the Government of Qatar would send another delegation to Sudan next week to discuss arrangements for the conference.

13. (SBU) Bebiker confirmed that Presidential Assistant Nafie ali Nafie is in Paris with MFA U/S Siddiq to negotiate a possible &package deal8 with the French regarding a deferral of the ICC indictment, which would include a peace plan on Darfur, deployment of UNAMID, and cooperation with the ICC (though to the Sudanese this means trying ICC indictees Kushayb and Haroun in Sudan). Bebiker said the GOS

is eager to hear US proposals on a package for Darfur and thought the leverage of the USG with Darfur rebels to bring them to the negotiating table would be useful. Bebiker also asked about the status of US-Sudan bilateral talks and whether SE Williamson would raise the issue during his visit.

He observed that a general road map on US-Sudan relations would be useful and suggested that an exchange of letters between President Bashir and President Bush might be the best way to lay out proposals on paper in the absence of a formal agreement.

14. (SBU) Separately, A/CDA Asquino and polchief met with Chief Mediator Bassole October 5 to discuss Bassole's plans for the mediation. Bassole shared his list of proposals for ending the Darfur crisis, starting with a Cessation of Hostilities, followed by a ceasefire that could be monitored by UNAMID, and then a political deal including compensation for IDPs, land rights, a single region, and a vice presidential position. Bassole said that he had not received a reply to his letter to Nafie ali Nafie, but was aware that regime officials are also discussing a possible package on Darfur. Bassole said he had productive meetings with the Qataris, who do not wish to take over the mediation but would rather coordinate closely with Bassole and his team. Bassole warned against linking the proposed talks in Doha to the Arab League initiative on the ICC, and discouraged attendance by other Arab League states at the conference in Doha, as the rebels would likely refuse to attend and the conference would be viewed only as an attempt to help Bashir avoid the ICC. Bassole said Abdel Wahid in particular had expressed this view. Bassole said that over the next week he plans to push GOS officials and JEM to present their proposals on a

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solution to the Darfur crisis, so that he can attempt to synthesize the documents.

15. (C) Comment: The NCP has evolved over the last two weeks in their discussions of possible solutions to the Darfur crisis; while two weeks ago the NCP was resistant to the idea of a single Darfur state (reftel), now it seems to be accepted as a necessary part of any peace deal. Although the NCP remains resistant to unilaterally making any concessions, there is now an opening for Bassole to begin shuttle diplomacy between the parties in earnest. US and French pressure on Abdelwadid and Khalil Ibrahim, at least to get them to the negotiating table, could prove essential. Although the NCP is not yet demanding concessions, it appears to believe that a combination of three essential points - UNAMID deployment, a plan for Darfur peace (even if only preliminary), and greater precision on how Kushayb and Haroun are to be treated) will be enough to get President Bashir off the hook. If this is not the case, the regime is likely to react strongly at least initially, though we continue to believe that the removal of the UN is unlikely as it would put the regime on a collision course with the West, with potentially dire repercussions, though we cannot discount the possibility of emotional reactions.

ASQUINO